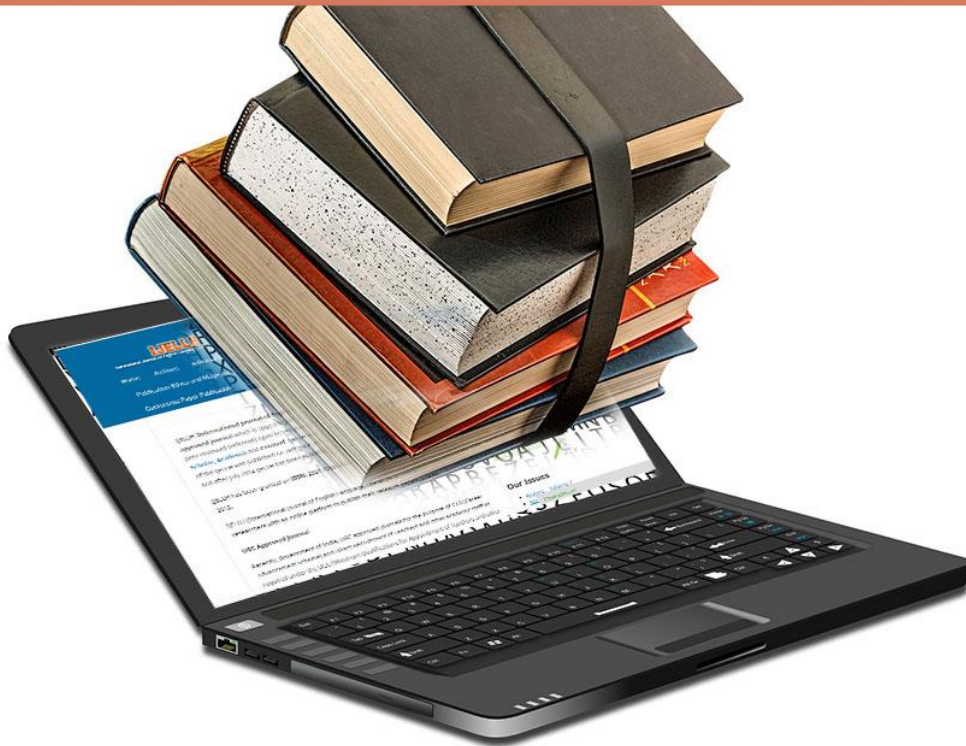


ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2019

www.ijellh.com

Dr. Satpal Singh

Assistant Prof., Dept. of English,

Govt. College,

Bhiwani, Haryana, India

Dr. Vibha

Associate Prof., Dept. of English,

Govt. College,

Bhiwani, Haryana, India

vduhan2@gmail.com

Recreating Past : A Critical Study of Girish

Karnad *Tughlaq*

Girish Karnad is the leading playwright of the contemporary Indian stage. His second play *Tughlaq* was published in Kannada in 1964. *Yayati* was his first composition. After writing *Yayati*, Karnad read all kinds of books in an effort to find a plot, some plot that would truly inspire. He read the history of Kannada literature by Kirtinath Kurtkoti and learnt from him that Indian history has not been handled by an Indian writer the way it has been done by Shakespeare or Brecht. Greatly impressed by this statement, Karnad went through a book of Indian history. And when he came to *Tughlaq*, he was at once interested. That was a subject in tune with the times. In those days, existentialism was quite in fashion. Everything about *Tughlaq* seemed to fit into what Karnad had surmised from Kurtkoti. He felt that in *Tughlaq*

he had found a fantastic character. *Tughlaq* was an immediate success on the stage. It was the first produced in Kannada in 1965.

Karnad's *Tughlaq* bears several resemblances with Shakespeare's *Richard II*. Like King Richard, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq is temperamental and whimsical. Events in both the plays centre on the eccentricities of their protagonists. Again, like Shakespeare, Karnad presents the historical events and complexities of the time with perfect objectivity of a true historian, throwing upon them a beautiful colorings of art. He exhibits without concealment the weakness of the king's character but spares no pain to evoke our whole hearted pity for him in his fall. The political chaos which Karnad depicts in *Tughlaq* reminded many readers of the Nehru era in Indian history. Karnad finds this similarity accidental. He says -

I did not consciously write about the Nehru era. I am always flattered when people tell me that it was about the Nehru era and equally applies to development of politics since then. But, I think, well, that is a compliment that any playwright would be thrilled to get, but it was not intended to be a contemporary play about a contemporary situation.¹

In *Tughlaq*, Girish Karnad turned to Indian history; he was fascinated by the character of the medieval Muslim ruler of India, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. Here was a man who proved to be a failure as a ruler. The steps that he took for the welfare of his public ultimately proved disastrous and caused people much suffering. However, when analyzed by the posterity, these steps were found to be theoretically very correct and revealed a vision that went beyond the contemporary period. Muhammad Tughlaq wanted to shift his capital from Delhi to a place in the centre of his empire. This was quite a sound judgement as Delhi was susceptible to foreign invasions. Tughlaq again wanted to use copper currency in place of the gold and silver ones. We who live not only in the age of paper currency but also of credit cards can easily appreciate the decision of Tughlaq. Similarly, Tughlaq took certain steps to establish religious equality, in a society which followed more than one religion. This can also be called a laudable step.

However, these measures boomeranged, mostly because it went against the time and also because they were not realized with a practical bearing in mind. All these things fascinated Karnad, who has always been interested in the study of the past. The past, however, does not interest him as something dead and gone. What interests him is, to borrow a phrase from T.S. Eliot, "the presentness of the past". He saw certain striking parallels between the medieval India and the India of 1960's. The post Nehru era saw a disillusionment of the people with some of Nehruvian idealism. Karnad could detect certain striking similarities between the Tughlaq era and the Nehru era. *Tughlaq* is a remarkable play not because it recreates a period that is passed but because it recreates a period which lives in our own time. U.R. Anantha Murthy remarks in this regard : "Another reason for Tughlaq's appeal to Indian audiences is that it is a play of the sixties, and reflects as no other play perhaps does, the political mood of disillusionment which followed the Nehru era of idealism in the country."²

Tughlaq deals with life and time of Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq of the fourteenth century India. The central character Muhammad Tughlaq and the number of characters who surround him are historical but the characters like Aziz and Aazam are dramatist's own creations. Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, the central character, dominates the play from beginning to the end. He is one of the most wonderful kings that ever ruled India. He is a visionary, an idealist, a great scholar, as well as a crafty politician that can hold his own against heavy odds. His lofty ideals and dreams however are frustrated within twenty years. Because of his noble ideas and visions which few could understand he was called 'Mad Tughlaq'. He, in fact, was one of the most extraordinary characters to come to the throne of Delhi. Tughlaq was one of the most learned and accomplished scholars of his time and no wonder he has been praised by his contemporaries. He had a keen intellect and a wonderful memory. He knew logic, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and physical sciences. He was a perfect master of composition and style. He was a brilliant calligraphist. He had a very good knowledge of

Persian poetry and took pleasure in quoting verse from Persian poetry and in his letters. He was also an expert in the game of chess and tried to solve the problems which could not be solved by the greatest of the chess men like Al-Adil and Sarakhi. His learning of the *Quran* was better than that of any Sheikh or Sayyid. He had made the prayers compulsory five times a day but had not levied any 'jiziya' tax on the Hindus or 'Kafir' as they were called. He knew that people of all religions were his subjects, and they must all be treated impartially. He knew medicine and was skilful in dialectics. He was an expert in the use of similes and metaphors. Zia-ud-din Barani describes him as learned scholar. He was generous. He gave a lot of gifts to all those who crowded his gate at all times. His habits were simple. He was free from the prevailing vices of the age. Ibn Batuta describes him as the most humble of men and one who is most inclined towards doing what is right and just. He follows the principles of religion with devoutness and offered prayers himself and punished those who neglected them. This, however, was one side of the coin, the other side was his shrewdness, cruelty, rashness.

Sultan M. Tughlaq had a lot of high imagination but he lacked practical judgement and common sense. He was hasty and hot tempered. He could not tolerate any opposition from any quarter and was ready to punish all those who dared to defy him or differ from him. Muhammad Tughlaq has been described as "a mixture of opposites". If he was kind generous and humble, he was also most cruel. While he gave gifts to all those who came to him, he was the responsible for the death so many. The temperament of the Sultan was such that nobody was sure as to what he would get. It was possible that he might get something in charity. It was equally possible that he might be hanged. He did not bother about the sentiments of the people. He had no balance or patience. He had no proportion and no wonder he failed. Historian Ishwari Prasad remarks: "The truth is that the Sultan combined a headstrong temper with advanced ideals of administrative reforms, and when his people failed to respond to his wishes, his wrath became

terrible. His impatience was the result of popular apathy, just as popular apathy was the outcome of this startling innovations.”³

Even his critics and opponents recognized his scholarship. Sheikh Imam-ud-din who raised the standard of revolt against the Sultan and stirred the people of Kanpur to rebel, admits that the Sultan is a scholar of eminence. He acknowledges that God has given the Sultan, 'power of learning, intelligence, talent' and that he is a learned man. Shihab-ud-din also never doubted the learning, scholarship and wisdom of the Sultan. He was proud of his elegant writing and his letters were models of style and composition. He had studied all the sciences of the period, especially Mathematics and medicine and used to attend patients himself and note down the progress of their complaints. He had read logic and Greek philosophy and was fond of metaphysical discussions with the learned men in his empire. He never neglected his religious duties, admitted no prayers and abstained from all vices forbidden in the holy Koran. In the play, Tughlaq has been portrayed with great psychological truth and depth. Tughlaq is a true idealist. Tughlaq has his own ideas which he wants to translate into action. He knows about the ignorance of his people and darkness they live in. He is fully aware of injustice, hatred and violence spread by the former kings of India. He is suspicious of their poverty and misery and the diseases the people suffer from he is aware of their corruption the false religion and also of the disunity in the state. He is idealistic and stands for justice equality, honesty and courage. To Barani he says that he believes in love, in peace, in God. He wishes every act in his kingdom to become a prayer, every prayer to become a further step in knowledge and every step to lead the people nearer to God. He wants every man to offer prayer five times a day and to read the Koran and to act upon it.

M. Tughlaq is the only unifying character in *Tughlaq*. He himself reveals his idealism, scholarship, secularism in his various speeches. When his idealism and administrative reforms are frustrated, a psychological change comes over him. In order to realise his plans and

administrative reforms he resorts to murder and bloodshed, gets frustrated and disillusioned. He is a crafty politician, who stoops to trickery, cunning and wickedness. He commits one murder after another. He is charged with patricide. He orders his step mother to be dragged and stoned to death; and commits matricide. To do away with opposition, he lays a trap for Sheikh Imam-ud-din by making him his envoy for peace and gets him murdered. Again, when Shihba-ud-din and the Amirs of the state plan to murder him at the prayer time, he keeps his balance, catches them in the net.

Ibn Batuta who came to India in 1333 A.D., definitely tells us that Prince Juna Khan was the cause of the death of his father. The source of his information was Shaikh Rukn-ud-din Multani who was present with the emperor on the occasion. He also tells us that Prince Juna Khan deliberately delayed the arrival of workmen who were called to dig up the body of the sultan with their shovel. Ibn Batuta also tells us that the construction of the pavilion was the work of Ahmed Ayaz who was later on made Chief Minister when Juna Khan himself became Sultan with the title of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. After the death of Sultan Ghias-ud-din, Ulugh Khan was proclaimed Sultan in Tughlaqabad and he assumed the title of Muhammad Shah. This was done only because keeping the throne vacant might have endangered peace and security of the empire. But no celebrations were permitted by the new Sultan. On the contrary, he clad himself in black as a mark of mourning for the death of his father.

The sudden death of Sultan at Afghanpur due to the fall of the pavilion created strong suspicion on Ulugh Khan and therefore prior to his accession he scattered gold and gold 'tankas' among the people in order to win them over. Barani says that at Delhi gold and silver coins were distributed by him in every lane. Sultan reached the city and entered the palace. He distributed gold and silver to appease the people. The Sultan's own mother held him responsible for the death of his father and brother and did not talk to him since that day. She hated him. His step mother loved him dearly, was always anxious about his welfare she is very much worried

about the welfare of Sultan. She was anxious to know that Ain-ul Mulk was invading Delhi. She takes Barani into confidence and tells him about his concern Muhammad: "I am worried about him. You know what he is like. He is such an intelligent boy and he works so hard for the people. He doesn't even go to sleep these days. But he is so impulsive and when he gets into one of his moods I don't know what he'll do next. You are a sober man, Barani, level headed and honest and he needs friends like you." ⁴

She does not like many of Tughlaq's advisors and so she requests Barani to promise her not to leave the Sultan, whatever he does. Barani is driven to tears by her maternal concern. Besides the step mother, Barani, the historian and Najib, a Hindu turned Muslim, who was his vizier, were his closest friends and well wishers. Barani is a historical personality, with great literary attainments. But he fails to understand the Sultan's political moves and strategies. Sultan sarcastically remarks, "Barani is a historian - he's only interested in playing chess with the shadows of the dead". (156) Najib is the vizier of Muhammad, as well as a close friend. He is contrast to Barani. Barani is a historian but Najib is a powerful politician - he wants pawns of flesh and blood. To him, as to Aziz, politics is a whole new world. In politics he sees his future. For him it is a beautiful world full of wealth, success, position and power.

Tughlaq deals with the last five years of the troubled reign of Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq. Karnad does not take up the whole reign of Muhammad Tughlaq as his subject. These years are the most dramatic as well as the most turbulent period of Tughlaq's rule. The action of the play takes place first of all in Delhi in the year 1327, then on the road from Delhi to Daulatabad, and lastly in and around the fort in the Daulatabad five years later. The play opens in a big yard in front of the chief court of justice in Delhi. The Chief Justice is known as Kazi-i-Mumalik and large number of people both Hindu and Muslims are gathered in the yard. From the conversation of the people we come to know that they dislike the Sultan. People have also heard the gossip of his having murdered his own father and brother. In Kanpur a great Muslim saint

Imam-ud-din has been spitting poison against him and half of the city is already burning. No doubt the Sultan has made prayer five times each day, compulsory, as ordained in the Koran, but he is supposed to be partial to the Hindus. He would reveal his true nature at the right time.

Great interest is being generated by a cause which is being heard by the Kazi-i-Mumalik at the time. Some land of a Brahmin was confiscated by government officials, and now the Brahmin has brought a law suit against the state. Soon a court official comes out and announces that Brahmin has won the case. The confiscated land would be returned to him and 500 dinars would be paid to him as compensation. In addition he would also get a government job in the civil service of the country. The Sultan is quite impartial and justice, to do to all without consideration at all of the person's religion. Sultan longs for justice to work in his kingdom without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or creed. He allows the people to criticize him openly and not to be afraid of him. After that the guard disperses the crowd, only Aazam hangs behind. He sees the Brahmin who has won the suit against the Sultan. Both Aziz and Aazam are comic characters but they also play a crucial role.

Next we are taken to the palace and introduced to Muhammad and the step mother. Muhammad proudly tells her that he has solved one of the most famous problems in chess which even the noted chess players could not solve. But the step mother who really loves him is very much worried about the fact that the Sultan does not sleep at the night as usual. Muhammad's troubles are mounting. While Sheikh Imam-ud-din is turning the people in Kanpur against him, his beyond friend Ain-ul-Mulk has revolted and is marching on Delhi with an army of thirty thousand soldiers to face him. The Sultan hatches a plan to persuade the Sheikh to go to Ain-ul-Mulk as his envoy. The Sultan first arranges a meeting for the Sheikh to address but none comes to listen to him, because the soldiers of the Sultan had gone from door to door and prevented the people from going to meet of the Sheikh. Not only that, the Sultan persuades the Sheikh to go as his envoy of peace to Ain-ul-Mulk so that there is no

fighting and precious Muslim blood is not shed. Moreover, Ain-ul-Mulk is his boyhood friend and he does not want to fight him.

Sheikh dressed in royal dress standing on a gorgeous elephant as the royal envoy to make peace. But according to Sultan's plan, the trumpet is sounded which is a signal for attack on Ain-ul-Mulk and his army. They in turn take the Sheikh to be the Sultan and shoot so many arrows at him that soon he is dead. There was lot of confusion and much bloodshed. The victorious Sultan is soon back in his palace amid general rejoicing. He explains to his step mother and others the cause of the Sheikh's death and his great grief. As regards Ain-ul-Mulk, he has pardoned him and sent him as governor of Avadh because he could easily detect a flaw in his solution of the chess problem.

A revolt is now brewing against the Sultan. The Sheikh, the Amirs and the Syeds are by now able to see through his crafty nature. Ratan Singh, who has his axe to grind also invites Shihab-ud-din to the meeting of the rebels. It is agreed that at prayer when the entire palace would be unarmed they would rise as one man and kill the Sultan. On the fix date, as soon as the rebels rise to attack the Sultan, twenty Hindu soldiers hidden behind the curtain attack the rebels and there is general massacre that Ratan Singh had sent all Shihab-ud-din's damaging letter to the Sultan. The Sultan is made with anger at the treachery of Shihab-ud-din and fiercely kill him, nobody can tell of his whereabouts, Tughlaq orders that an announcement be made to the effect that Shihab-ud-din has been killed by protecting the Sultan in a mutiny in the palace. So his funeral will be held in Delhi and will be grand affairs. Barani who knews that Shihab-ud-din's death was managed by the Sultan, rightly remarks: "Oh, God aren't even the dead free from your politics". (185) and Tughlaq further says: "There will be no more praying in the Kingdom, Najib. Anyone caught praying will be severely punished."⁵ (186)

There has been also an announcement that every citizen of Delhi must leave for Daulatabad. So the people are now on March. In a camp on the Delhi-Daulatabad route, a

Hindu woman is kneeling before Aziz who is dressed as a Brahmin. She is crying for her ailing child to take him to a doctor. She promises to return the next day. But Aziz wants his palm to be greased. Even Aazam's advice fails. A very important experiment was made by the Sultan in shifting his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. The new capital had its strategic value. It was safe from Mongolian invasions which constantly threatened Delhi. The Sultan also did his best to make Daulatabad a suitable place for his officers and the people all facilities were provided for those who were required to migrate to Daulatabad. A broad road was constructed for their convenience. A regular postal service was established between Delhi and Daulatabad. When the people of Delhi hesitated to shift to Daulatabad, the Sultan got annoyed and he ordered all people of Delhi to proceed to Daulatabad with their belongings. Thousands die on the way and there is much suffering. Cries to lamentation resound in the atmosphere. But rogues like Aziz and Aazam thrive on the suffering of the people. They make a lot of money. However, they are tired of their petty roguery and decide to make money in a big way. They will no more pinch any coins, they will now make them. They plan to make counterfeit copper coins and exchange them for silver coins. Such exchange shall be strictly in accordance with the orders of the Sultan.

Five years pass, five years of great suffering for the people. Muhammad, when only twenty-one had built a big fort at Daulatabad, a fort so large and strong that it could only fall from within. No enemy could reach it from without. Muhammad who has now his palace in this fort is unable to sleep. The Sultan is spiritually lonely and tortured within. This becomes clear from the following words of his to Barani :

Don't you see that the only way I can abdicate is by killing myself? I could have done something if the vulture were't so close. I could have crawled forward on my knees and elbows. But what can you do when every moment you expect a beak to dig into you

and tear a muscle out? What can you do? Barani what vengeance is driving these shapes after me?⁶ (196)

The vultures are his ideals and his aspirations. All his idealism is shattered. Justice and equality is denied by his state officers to the people. Thieving and looting and killing are rampant in his state. Aziz and Azam are busy looting the people. Aziz kills Abbasid. Corpses are seen in the road. Tughlaq's ideal of making his people prosperous and happy is also gone to bits. There is starvation and hunger throughout the country. People eat burnt strips of skin of all kinds of animals. Sultan is a frustrated man and the consciousness, that his people called him 'Mad Muhammad'. This frustration is made worse still when news is brought that Najib, his trusted vizier, has been murdered. Later he comes to know that it is his own step mother who had him poisoned Muhammad at once has his mother arrested and orders that she be stoned for adultery. In disguise of Ghiyas-ud-din, Aziz, and his follower Azam reaches Daulatabad. He is given a royal welcome and public prayers are resumed from that moment. Aazam frightened, he wants that they should go out from the palace and run away Aziz refused to do so and so Aazam goes alone. Aziz murdered as soon as he comes out of the secret passage. The news of the murder is brought to Muhammad and he at once understands, he threatens him with death for deceiving him and his people; Aziz uses his wits and begs forgiveness. The Sultan is very much impressed by his craftiness, though Barani warns that he was trying to spread a net of fine words to ensnare the Sultan. However, the Sultan is most pleased with the clever man, decides that he will be sent to the Deccan as a powerful officer. After that, the Sultan allows Barani to go to the Baran for the funeral of his mother. Tughlaq is impulsive.

Tired and exhausted the Sultan falls asleep on the throne. The play ends as Muhammad suddenly opens his eyes and looks around dazed and frightened as though he cannot comprehend where he is. He seems lost. The play ends here. The Sultan has passed sleepless nights. He has realized that his move to shift the capital to Daulatabad has been a big failure

and so has ordered the people to return to Delhi at once. Even his most trusted friends have proved treachery. He has lived in an atmosphere of intrigue and treacherous. Although he was crafty and punished all who raised their hands against him. But now he is a frustrated man. The sleep of Muhammad indicates all this. Tughlaq wanted to be an ideal king very much different from those who had ruled Delhi before him. He wanted to be a king, worthy to wear the royal robes, to be loved by the people of his state, to gain their confidence to beget trust. In his Sultanate he expected to have love and peace but he got hatred, contempt and revolt. His own mother does not talk to him, his step mother suspects him even Barani doubts him. He is disliked by the Muslims and Hindus alike. The state is in a mess. There is an "uprising in the Deccan". In Malabar, Ehsanshah has declared him independent. Bahal-ul-ud-din Gashtasp is collecting an army against him. The drought in Doab is spreading from town to town. Only one industry flourishes in his kingdom only one that is of making counterfeit copper coins. There is none to be trusted in the whole kingdom. The country has become a honeycomb of diseases. Tughlaq's ideals were frustrated within the short span of twenty years.

At the ending of the play, Sultan orders that all should return to Delhi and thus he compounds the misery of his people. He thus realized his mistake and consequently was considered made by the people. He ordered that copper coins would be the currency of his kingdom and would have the same value as silver dinar. There was nothing wrong in it for in China they already had paper currency. But he gave this order without making proper arrangement for the minting of the new currency. So heaps of counterfeit coins reached him and had to be dumped in the rose garden which was the result of much effort and labour. In this way he brought ruin and disaster on his Sultanate and made himself laughing stocks of all concern.

Muhammad-bin-Tughalq's character has been described as a compound of the highest virtues and the grossest and most horrible vices. Full details about his reign are available from

the pen of Ibn-Batuta, the celebrated African traveller, who for a long time had been in the service of Muhammad. He was the most eloquent and accomplished Prince of his time, regular in his devotions and temperate in his living, a liberal supporter of learning, and in war a brave and gallant soldier. Many of his actions seem to show, however, that he was quite indifferent to any suffering he might cause and utterly careless of his subject's lives. Ibn Batuta refers to the heavy punishments inflicted by the Sultan on the Shaikhs and Qazis. We are told that the Sultan slew both the small and the great and spared not the learned, pious or the nobles. Everyday men in chains and fetters were brought to the council hall and some were led to executions, some of torture and some to scourging.

A historical play seems to be a contradiction in terms. History requires truth to the events of the past, but art requires imagination and concentration on needs of art. This means in other words that the writer of a historical play must use the facts of history with discretion to suit the needs of his drama, while maintaining overall truth to history he has to deviate from the facts of history, and even introduce new characters in the interest of dramatic effectiveness. This is what Karnad has also done in the present play. As regards Tughlaq's idealism, scholarship, religious tolerance and his feelings of Hindu Muslim unity, Karnad closely follows historical sources. Karnad portrays Tughlaq as generous and charitable in the first scene. He accepts the Qazi's judgment graciously in which he himself is held guilty of misappropriating the land of Vishnu Prasad and he also sanctions him a grant of five hundred silver dinars and offers the said Vishnu Prasad a post in civil service to ensure him a regular and adequate income. Karnad follows history in making Tughlaq guilty of patricide and fratricide. Karnad does not present Tughlaq as repentant over their murder as he has to highlight his heartlessness and wanton acts of cruelty. Historical records prove that Tughlaq was stung with a deep feeling of remorse over his father's murder. He atoned for the crime and immediately after his succession to the throne he caused his father's name to be inscribed on the coins.

Girish Karnad adroitly employs historical evidence about Tughlaq's rash decision to change the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. It is a turning point in his career and it causes inexpressible suffering to the common people. In the opening scene he announces his decision to change the capital of his empire from Delhi to Daulatabad. It was, in fact, in furtherance of this policy of consolidating the authorities of Delhi over the countries beyond the Narbada, that Muhammad Tughlaq was led to remove his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Karnad describes it as a mass exodus. He follows contemporary historians who, as has already been explained, condemned the Sultan indiscreetly. The contemporary historians emphasises on mass exodus, which Girish Karnad also present in *Tughlaq* is not correct. In fact the upper classes comprising nobles, countiers, Sheikhs, Ulema and the elite were shifted by Daulatabad. The general Hindu public remained unaffected by this project. Karnad shows a Hindu man in dire suffering and penury. It is a magnified description of this limited exodus of the upper class of Delhi into a mass exodus.

Ibn Battuta also writes about the Sultan's ruthlessness and inhumanity as Barani does. According to Inb Battuta, Tughlaq, punished all offences both great and small without any distinction and with equal severity. The priests and clericals were deprived of their long enjoyed monopoly. He did not believe in the infallibility of the priestly order. It is evident that Karnad was more influenced by Barani than by Ibn Battuta and other historians who have endeavored to portray Tughlaq without any bias or prejudice. The great historian, Barani tells us that the experiment was due to two causes. The five cause was the need of money to maintain the great army of conquest numbering 3,70,000. The scond cause was the deficiency in the treasury caused by the lavish gifts made by the Sultan. Another probable cause can be the relative scarcity of silver in the market. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, another probable cause was the love of experiment on the part of the Sultan who was a man of original cost of

mind, well versed in the arts and sciences of the age. The Sultan might have felt a powerful impulse for the experiment in a scientific spirit.

Karnad also refers to famine and plague which ravaged India during the Sultan's reign but he does not sympathise with Tughlaq who had to face a number of calamities both natural and manmade. Karnad has portrayed Najib as an important character who exercises great influence on Tughlaq and is later on murdered by the machinations of his step mother. In history he is not a very important character. Girish Karand presents him as the evil genius of the Sultan in order to justify his aim which is to find a parallel in Tughlaq's administration for the India of 1960's. The episode of Aziz and Aazan too has been with the purpose of creating humour and to exhibit the failure of Tughlaq's administration. Karnad has taken only partial one sided view of Tughlaq's character and administration and has based the plot of Tughlaq only on Barani and other orthodox historical sources. Karnad in Tughlaq lacks in just and impartial treatment of historical theme. *Tughlaq* is a historical play, but while writing it Karnad himself was struck by the parallelism between the reign of Tughlaq and contemporary history. Tughlaq was a powerful personality but he disintegrated within a short span of twenty years and the mood of disillusionment that set in corresponds well with the mood of frustration at the end of Nehru era.

At every step the play reflects the chaos, disillusionment and corruption that followed the Nehru era, and this is one of the most important reasons of the popularity of the play. Tughlaq ruled in the fourteenth century and Nehru in the 1950's and 1960's. Striking parallels can easily be drawn between the two ages. This makes Tughlaq a great political allegory. It tells the story of the reign of Tughlaq and the rapid disintegration of his personality. It also tells of the shattering of ideals after the death of Nehru and the frustration of corruption that followed. Girish Karnad uses history and places facts of history in the midst of imaginary incidents and situation to dramatize history. The Hindu and the Muslims did not trust one

another. The Muslims called the Hindus bloody infidels who deserved to be kicked. And the Hindus suspected the Muslims called the Hindus bloody infidels who deserved to be kicked. And the Hindus suspected the Muslims and could hardly believe that a Muslim was going to see them prosper and to exempt them from taxes without having his own benefit in view. Despite the best efforts of Muhammad to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together, he failed. This fact of fourteenth century still holds good. Gandhi, the idealist, made attempts to write the Hindus and the Muslims. Nehru followed Gandhi's footsteps. As a Prime Minister, he wanted to unite the two but he failed. There were Hindu-Muslim riots and deep rooted suspicion.

Girish makes Tughlaq an idealist and establishes that in politics idealism and establishes that in politics idealism does not pay. It is bound that to fail, especially when the idealist is impulsive. Tughlaq is very intelligent and works very hard for the people. he is not able to sleep even at nights. Even the enemies of Sultan recognise his learning and scholarship. But this learned and talented Sultan is very impulsive. He cannot tolerate opposition. But means which are not always straight, he puts down dissension and wipes away the dissenters from his path of glory. Sheikh Imam-ud-din is his greatest critic. He rouses the people of Kanpur with his fiery speeches. He tells them that the Sultan is guilty of patricide and fratricide and that he is a great transgressor of Islamic tents. The audience goes wild and burns down half of Kanpur.

The Sultan comes to know the people's rising and invites Imam-ud-din to Delhi to address his people and to analyse the Sultan's administration and show where he has gone wrong. The Imam is caught in the trap. When he comes to Delhi he finds no audience to listen to him. Tughlaq has maneuvered people's staying behind at the point of bayonet. The Sheikh is depressed. He is flattered by the Sultan and requested to be the royal envoy to the Nawab of Avadh to plead for peace in the name of Islam. The Imam put on the royal robes and looking very much like the Sultan rides the elephant to the scene of the battle. All of a sudden the charge is sounded and the battle begins. The Sheikh is killed. Later Tughlaq murders Shihab with his

own hands. He orders his mother to be dragged and killed for murdering Najib, the Sultan most trusted lieutenant. Those murders in Muhammad's own words gave him what wanted - power, strength to shape his own thoughts, strength to act, strength to recognize himself. All his idealism is shattered and thrown to the winds.

This double facedness of Muhammad very much resembles the two face of the politician of today. The craftiness of Tughlaq is paralleled in the arch-trickery and meanness adopted by those in power to wipe out the opposition and also that of the opposition to throw out the rulers in India after Independence and also in the eighties, the longing to rule by all means is as true as it was the reign of Tughlaq. Gandhi was murdered by a mad Hindu. Pandit Nehru had to give up Tughlaq's method of curbing the opposition. The rulers and politicians of our democracy adopted subtle methods which remains unseen by common eyes. In this, the rulers of the twentieth century are in no way different from the monarch of fourteenth century India. Tughlaq's character is used only as background to portray what is happening today. Tughlaq thinks that whatever he does is right and for the good of the people. He wants his path to lead towards greater justice, equality, progress and peace; he aims at a more purposeful life. And to achieve this end he proposes to take a new step to transfer his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. He explains to the people that his empire cannot flourish with Delhi as capital. Daulatabad as a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity will help to achieve his ideal. He seeks the co-operation of his people in this project. But they do not understand him. His idea is very much ahead of the times and beyond the understanding of the common man. In contemporary India a large number of projects are set afloat for the welfare and the prosperity of the country but because they are not well executed, they fail.

People in charge of the project take bribes as was done during Tughlaq's days while people were going to Daulatabad. The administrators become indifferent to the convenience of the common people as do Aziz and Aazam in *Tughlaq*, the people are bound to suffer. In India

today crores of rupees are spent to check famine and drought and also uplift the poor and the depressed, yet their condition does not improve because most of the money is misappropriate by administrators. When authority is placed in the hands of the officials concerned the reward for obtaining convenience, immediately makes the official work and help the needy. Tughlaq's time is in no way different from that of India today. In *Tughlaq*, Karnad puts forward some of the historical facts: the burning of Kanpur, the revolt of the Nawab of Avadh, Fakr-ud-din's revolt in Bengal, the uprising in Deccan and in Malabar. Ehasanshah's declaration of independence and Bahal-ud-din Gashtasp's collecting the army against the Sultan, the revolt of Ain-ul-Mulk and Shihab-ud-din. All these incidents look like similar fissiparous tendencies in India today. The people in the North the Punjabis demanding Khalistan are vocal from without and within and have been the cause of the murder of our beloved Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. A cold war is going on between the rulers of Bengal and Andhra Pradesh and those at the centre. How is the India of today different from that of Tughlaq's days? Only the people and personages have changed, the forces and the cause haven't. The struggle to gain power and to perpetuate it is the basic fact that remains unaltered.

Karnad makes use of some action of Tughlaq to bear upon the actions in contemporary India. Tughlaq lifted the jizia and imposed taxes impartially on the Hindus and Muslims alike. This was done with a view to maintain absolute impartiality. But this move of his was misconstrued by the Hindus. Any tax imposed today is resented. Direct tax may be house tax, water tax, wealth tax or income tax is most vehemently criticized. They hardly realize that the taxes thus collected can be utilized for the building of roads and railways for providing more and more conveniences and comforts to the people. Their only aim is to make the best use of the issue of taxes for rousing the people against the government. What Karnad shows in *Tughlaq* is that the idealist and the idealism do not go hand in hand with a politician and his politics. The idealist politician is a misnomer in any age. There are many idealists today who

have to face challenges which they try to curb down in their own crafty manner. They are trying to make history not only in their state craft but by producing lasting results. In this the attempt of Tughlaq failed. He could not produce any lasting result. Hence he was called mad. His idealism had become a mockery. Every act, sane or foolish, he wanted to justify. This is done by our modern rulers also. Even wars which cost innumerable lives and cause greatest of havoc are justified. Nobody calls these rulers mad as the historians called Tughlaq, though they are no less mad than Tughlaq.

Karnad has succeeded in giving the feel of life of the fourteenth century which is quite relevant to the contemporary reality in India. The contemporaneity of *Tughlaq* was noticed by Karnad himself as he was choosing the subject for his play. Parallels between Tughlaq and Nehru were obvious, including the disenchantment that followed among the people. U.R. Anantha Murthy also considers *Tughlaq* more than political allegory. The murderous. Najib has echoes of some of the later politicians. The numerous governmental schemes that are announced now that then and how they are implemented will always have memories of Tughlaq. Aziz's discovery of the political world in Delhi is currently relevant as the regional politicians have their field day in Delhi, threatening the government with withdrawal of support. The nexus between politicians and criminals as well as corrupt bureaucrats, and the unholy alliance between politicians and fake religious leaders are coming to the fore more. *Tughlaq* thus is truly timeless.

REFERENCES

- R.K. Dhawan, "Girish Karnad : The Man and the Writer", The Play of Girish Karnad. ed. Jaydipsinh Dodiya. New Delhi : Prestige Books, P. 11-20.
- Girish Karnad, "Introduction" to Tughlaq in Girish Karnad Three Plays-Naga-Mandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq. New Delhi India Parperbacks, 1995, 1998, P. 143.
- Vidya Dhar Mahajan. Muslim Rule in India. New Delhi : S. Chand and Co., 1970, P. 177-178.
- Vidya Dhar Mahajan. Muslim Rule in India. New Delhi : S. Chand and Co., 1970, P. 160.
- Vidya Dhar Mahajan. Muslim Rule in India. New Delhi : S. Chand and Co., 1970, P. 186.
- Vidya Dhar Mahajan. Muslim Rule in India. New Delhi : S. Chand and Co., 1970, P. 196.